



## Control, uncertainty, and expectations for the future: A qualitative study of the impact of drought on a rural Australian community

**Author(s):** Sartore GM, Kelly B, Stain H, Albrecht G, Higginbotham N  
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### Abstract:

Many rural Australian communities continue to endure a prolonged drought. The mental health effects of short-term natural disaster are well known; those of a long-term and chronic natural disaster such as drought are less well understood. However, in addition to immediate distress there are likely to be feelings of loss, grief and hopelessness, all of which are implicated in an increased risk of subsequent psychiatric morbidity. Furthermore, rural Australia is at a relative disadvantage for early and effective mental health intervention due to a lack of resources, compared with urban Australia. This qualitative research investigates the experience of drought in two farming communities in the state of New South Wales. Farmers, farm and non-farm businesspeople, and health workers took part in focus group discussions of the effects of drought on themselves, their families and their community. In addition to current distress related to financial and workload problems, people reported experiencing significant distress from the emotional impact of environmental degradation, from loss of hope for the future of their community, and from feelings of being misunderstood by the wider Australian community. The stressors affecting farming communities during times of drought are likely to be associated with increased risk of mental health problems.

**Source:** Ask your librarian to help locate this item.

### Resource Description

#### Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

#### Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Health Professional, Public

**Other Communication Audience:** Farmers

#### Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event

# Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

**Extreme Weather Event:** Drought

**Geographic Feature:** 

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Rural

**Geographic Location:** 

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

**Non-United States:** Australasia

**Health Impact:** 

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Mental Health/Stress

**Mental Health Effect/Stress:** Stress Disorder

**Intervention:** 

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

**Mitigation/Adaptation:** 

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

**Population of Concern:** A focus of content

**Population of Concern:** 

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status, Workers

**Resource Type:** 

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

**Timescale:** 

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

**Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:** 

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content